

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

6/21/78

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

Dear Mr. Kasten:

This is in further reply to your letter of May 17 concerning three priests who have disappeared in Argentina.

Our Embassy in Buenos Aires has previously expressed its concern to the Government of Argentina about Pablo Bustos and has requested the Argentine Foreign Office Working Group on Human Rights to provide information about him. Unfortunately, they have informed the Embassy that the Government of Argentina has no record of his detention nor any information regarding his whereabouts. The Embassy will, however, continue to monitor the case and we will contact your office immediately should we receive any information concerning Father Bustos.

With regard to Kleber Silva Iribarnegaray and Pablo Garrazzi, we have requested our Embassy to make inquiries to the Working Group on their behalf. We will be pleased to forward any information we receive to your office.

We have been deeply concerned about the large number of disappearances and other evidence of human rights abuses in Argentina, and repeatedly have expressed these concerns to the Government at the highest levels.

We have taken a number of actions to convey to the Argentines how strongly committed we are to human rights--grant military training for Argentina has been withdrawn, arms sales have been held back, and we have linked our vote in the International Financial Institutions to the Argentine record on human rights. We have clearly

The Honorable,
Robert M. Kasten, Jr.,
House of Representatives.

Lot 81D208
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indicated that an improvement in human rights practices is essential to a continuation of good bilateral relations. Approval of any new assistance programs will depend on substantial human rights improvements. Indeed, the Congress has legislated as part of the Foreign Assistance Act, that beginning October 1 there will be no new arms transfers to Argentina without major human rights improvements.

You may wish to suggest to your constituent that she also send information about the above-mentioned individuals to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organization of American States, 1725 I Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20006.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

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